United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1353
18 March 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

• Secretary-General conveys to Prime Minister Rabin of Israel his "serious concern" at situation in occupied territories; that unresolved issue of Palestinian deportees may continue to be a "stumbling block" in re-integration of Palestinians in peace process; both men agree that Peace Talks should be resumed as soon as possible.

• Security Council welcomes report by Commission on the Truth on El Salvador; urges all parties to comply with recommendations.

• United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, expresses "strong concern" at all obstacles preventing delivery of humanitarian aid to population of Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica; food convoy to Bosnia and Herzegovina held by local Serbian forces at Bosnian-Serb border.

• Security Council strongly condemns violations of "no-fly" zone in Bosnia and Herzegovina; demands explanation from Bosnian Serb side for aerial bombardement of Bosnian towns; requests investigation to be conducted.

• Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia suspends meeting, as fact-finding mission will travel to Kismayo tomorrow to "ascertain the facts"; to report back on Saturday.

• United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission concludes ninth session in Geneva; reaffirms importance of navigational access for both States to various parts of their territory bordering demarcated boundary.

• Solidarity between women of North and South emphasized at opening of session of Commission on Status of Women in Vienna.

• World Food Programme to provide emergency food aid to Togolese refugees in Benin.

* * *

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today conveyed to Prime Minister Rabin of Israel his "serious concern" at the situation in the occupied territories. He stressed the importance of the implementation of resolution 681 (1990), which deals with the protection of civilians in the occupied territories.

According to a press release issued by the Spokesman for the Secretary-General tonight, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali also conveyed to Mr. Rabin that the unresolved issue of the Palestinian deportees may continue to be a stumbling block in the re-integration of the Palestinians in the peace process. They both agreed that the Peace Talks should be resumed as soon as possible. The Secretary-General informed the Israeli Prime Minister that the United Nations was actively preparing for the Multilateral Working Groups "as and when they resumed".

Mr. Rabin recommended to the Secretary-General that the budget of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the occupied territories be increased, which would greatly benefit the Palestinian population in those areas.

* * *

The Security Council has welcomed the submission of the report of the Commission on the Truth and of its recommendations to prevent the repetition of the acts of violence committed during the 12 years of armed confrontation in El Salvador. It has also welcomed the recent efforts to apply fully the peace accords in El Salvador and acknowledged the sense of responsibility and cooperation demonstrated by the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) to reach this objective.

In a statement read out this morning following a formal meeting of the Security Council, its President, Terence O'Brien (New Zealand), also underlined the need for the parties, in accordance with the peace accords, to comply with the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Truth, as well as "all other obligations which remained to be implemented".

The Council's members also called upon the Salvadorian society to continue acting with the responsibility which it has demonstrated throughout the peace process, in order to contribute to the consolidation of internal peace and the maintenance of a genuine and lasting atmosphere of national harmony.

The Council invited the Secretary-General to keep it informed regarding the implementation of the parties' pending commitments and expressed its willingness to assist the parties "as appropriate" to achieve the successful completion of the peace process in El Salvador.

The Commission on the Truth, set up to investigate acts of violence committed by both sides during the conflict in El Salvador, issued its report on Monday, 15 March.

(more)

* * *

In a press release issued today in Geneva, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, expressed strong concern over "all obstacles" preventing the delivery of vital relief supplies to the embattled Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica. The situation in the region is becoming increasingly desperate, the press release noted.

"I vehemently condemn the unacceptable attitude of the Bosnian Serb military, who are preventing -- despite all their verbal and written commitments -- the access of humanitarian assistance to the victims", she said.

Stating that it was a matter of life or death for thousands of innocent people, Mrs. Ogata called on world leaders to send in aid to Srebrenica by all "possible means". She also welcomed the intervention of the authorities in Belgrade to put an end to this situation, but expressed regrets that it had not been enough, the release noted.

The UNHCR warned that at least 60,000 people, who were trapped in the vicinity of Srebrenica, faced death by fighting, starvation, exposure and lack of medical care.

In a separate development, a United Nations convoy which left the Serbian town of Mali Zornik today with vital relief supplies for Srebrenica was turned back by local Serbian forces.

According to a United Nations spokesman at Headquarters today, the 14-truck convoy was stopped on the Serbian side of the border despite previous assurances from Belgrade authorities that it would be authorized to proceed.

* * *

The Security Council, citing two recent violations of its resolution establishing a "no-fly" zone over the airspace of Bosnia and Herzegovina, last night strongly condemned such violations and demanded that they cease immediately.

In a statement read out by its President, Terence O'Brien (New Zealand), the Council demanded from the Bosnian Serbs an immediate explanation of the aerial bombardment of two Bosnian towns - Gladovici and Osatica - by planes which were then seen leaving in the direction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

The Council further requested the Secretary-General to ensure that an investigation was conducted into the possible use of the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to launch air attacks against Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also mandated its President to convey to the Yugoslav Foreign Minister and to the leader of the Bosnian Serbs its demand that they take immediate action against the repetition of such attacks.

(more)

* * *

The Council, which was informed about the incidents by the Secretary-General in two letters, noted that some 465 violations of the no-fly zone had been reported since the beginning of the monitoring operations in November 1992. However, the most recent violations were the first ones observed by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to involve combat activity.

In separate development, the spokesman for the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, told correspondents that Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen met today with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic. Later on, the Co-Chairmen also met with Mate Boban, the Bosnian Croat leader, and Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, separately. At the time, no date for a formal meeting between all parties had been set.

* * *

A fact-finding team set up by the Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia, will visit the port city of Kismayo on Friday to "ascertain facts" relating to recent clashes between warring Somali factions, according to a spokesman today. The clashes led to the "suspension" of the reconciliation talks currently held in Addis Ababa.

The spokesman said the fact-finding team would visit the Somali city to meet with leaders of the feuding Somali factions. They would report to the Conference on Saturday, when the talks were likely to reconvene, he added.

Meanwhile, according to a summary of the Conference in Addis Ababa issued today, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Lansana Kouyate, yesterday met with representatives of the Somali political factions, including General Aideed.

The General, according to the summary, said he had no "intention" to withdraw from the Conference, but reiterated his demand that the Conference condemn the attack on Kismayo, "allegedly" carried out by forces loyal to Mr. Mohammed Siad Hersi, known as General Morgan.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Admiral Jonathan Howe, arrived in Addis Ababa today, to participate in the reconciliation talks.

* * *

United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission reaffirmed the importance of navigational access for both States to the various parts of their respective territories bordering the demarcated boundary as a means to ensure an equitable character and to promote stability, peace and security along the border.

The Commission also noted that the right of navigation and access was provided for under the rules of international law, as embodied in the 1982

(more)

United Nations Convention of the Law of the sea ratified by both Iraq and Kowait.

The Commission further decided on the marking of certain areas of the boundary between the two countries, as it concluded its ninth session held in Geneva this week.

It took this action after reviewing the results of the aerial photography conducted in February in preparation for additional large-scale mapping and for the determination of the low-water springs for demarcation purposes.

The Commission's next session is scheduled for 30 April.

* * *

The Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women, Merwat Tallawi from Egypt, opened the body's thirty-seventh session in Vienna yesterday. She stressed that solidarity among women of the North and South was necessary in order to face the challenges of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Bejing in 1995.

In another statement, the Secretary-General of the Forth World Conference, Gertrude Mongella, pointed out that the event would provide an opportunity to see how far the international objectives on women had advanced 20 years after the first such Conference was held.

The Commission also began discussing efforts to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. A report by the Secretary-General on that issue was introduced by Chafika Meslem, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

* * *

The World Food Programme (WFP) announced yesterday in Rome that it would provide 3,600 metric tons of emergency food aid to 40,000 Togolese refugees in Benin for the next six months.

Civil unrest and growing insecurity in their country had forced more than 140,000 Togolese to flee into neighbouring Benin. 40,000 of these refugees are reported of being in need for immediate emergency food aid and shelter.

WFP already supports relief aid for a six-month period to 50,000 Togolese refugees in Ghana, at a cost of $2 million. Altogether, 300,000 persons are estimated of having sought asylum to other countries, mainly Benin and Ghana.

* * *

(more)

CORRECTION: In Highlights of 16 March 1993, "National Alliance for a Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) should read "National Army of Democratic Kampuchea".

* *** *